

been lacerated in many a bloody encounter in these Dutch fens into the spirit of revolution, and when concession is a sign of weakness it does not tend to induce belief in your adversary's generosity or sincerity. There was, indeed, always room for distrust, and William's distrust was irrefragable. "Don John," said he, " means to deceive us," and from this conviction nothing would move him, though he would gladly have seen an end of the tragedy of the last ten years in a durable peace. Fie had no reason to mistake in Philip's representatives paragons of honour or humanity, and his memory was too loaded with horrors to stop short of the most absolute guarantees of good faith. " So many horrible examples and acts, fresh in our minds," said he to Junius, " suffice to teach us that all those who have meddled in such treaties of peace have not earned honour, but rather blame." Even Groen van Prinsterer, who, in spite of his admiration for William, seeks, with perhaps an excess of impartiality, to vindicate Don John, and even Philip, admits that "a reconciliation with the king, whatever its conditions, would, sooner or later, have brought about a fatal result for the cause of reform."

Don John himself was not ignorant where the knot of all his difficulties lay. " From the depth of Holland," as M. Gachard truly remarks, " the prince inspired, directed, what took place at Brussels." "The people," wrote the Don to Philip in despair, " are, as it were, entranced by him ; they love him ; they fear him ; they desire him as their lord ; they give him notice of everything, and take no resolution without consulting him." " I am as one crying in the wilderness," he added, after a few weeks' trial of his skill in statecraft Whilst he withdrew, baffled, to Namur to begin the work of coercion over again (July 1577), William, at the summons of the States-General, entered Brussels in triumph to take the place from which his astuteness had ousted the raw cavalier politician. It was not his desire of power, but his distrust of a lasting peace, as long as Philip was not hopelessly beaten to the ground, that dictated his tactics. The Spanish troops had once before taken their departure, and yet in five years' time Alva and his Council of Blood held the miserable provinces in their vice. Philip's intercepted despatches showed